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Patchwork Republic

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Stellingen

1. If rhetoric can create a sense of belonging to one people, it can likewise tear that people apart
2. In 1787 and long after, “we the people” remained the expression of a wish, not a reality
3. Instead of a unified state, antebellum America must be seen as a patchwork republic
4. When trying to make sense of the Constitution, we should heed the warning of historian Jack Rakove never to forget that it is a debate we are interpreting
5. Unless European scholars and policymakers start to recognize their flawed understanding of U.S. constitutional history, this continent will be caught in a perpetual dance with the elusive model America
6. At a time when the call for a “United States of Europe” is louder than ever, we can take some comfort in the thought that the American process too was long, piecemeal, and contested
7. “We have to do with the past only as we can make it useful to the present and to the future” (Frederick Douglass)
8. Even though the U.S. Constitution is the undisputed foundation of American politics, nobody seems to be able to agree on what it means
9. If nothing that’s worth anything ever comes easy, every PhD-thesis is priceless